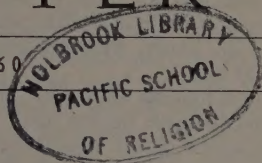


THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWS LETTER

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## A HISTORY OF FELLOWSHIP

REV. JAMES F. ENGLISH, D.D.

*Superintendent, Connecticut Conference*

Connecticut is rich in its Congregational heritage and traditions. The children of the Puritans came to the valley of the broad river and to the shores of Long Island Sound in the 1630's. They established towns and churches together and they set up a form of government which served them well. The Fundamental Orders of 1639, inspired in part by the Rev. Thomas Hooker, is an instrument which John Fiske declared to be "the first written constitution known to history that created a government and it marked the beginning of American democracy."

In church as well as secular life we owe much to Thomas Hooker. To quote Clinton Rossiter in "Seedtime of the Republic" —

"In placing a little more emphasis on the covenant of man to man than on that of man to God, on the congregation than on the elders, on the 'right hand of fellowship' than on the discipline of the synod, on the reason in man than on his sinfulness, on practice than on doctrine, on evangelism than on speculation, on the New Testament than on the Old, Hooker pried open a door that later generations of New England churchmen swung wide for liberty."

In the early 1700's there was the Saybrook Synod and the subsequent Saybrook Platform (already referred to in a number of News Letters). This helped to bring into being the historic General Association of Connecticut. Here was recognized and defined the principle of responsibility in fellowship. The General Association was the outward symbol of fellowship in colony and state. Its records tell the story of religious and social concern and indicate a continuing vitality in the life of the churches. Its greatest contribution was the founding in 1798 of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, to send missionaries to the new settlements. This and an alert social concern helped to spark the Second Great Awakening in Connecticut described so well in Professor Charles Keller's book of that title.

Many great names are in this tradition: — Thomas Hooker in the 17th century, Jonathan Edwards in the 18th and Horace Bushnell in the 19th. Tides of thought have swept across the little land and the names of Emmons, Bellamy, Dwight, Taylor, Robbins and many others are held in reverence. Indeed the mantle of Hooker seems to have fallen upon Bushnell so that the influence of the latter's noble, free spirit is one of our richest blessings today.

For the past 100 years Connecticut has been in transition. Successive waves of immigration have altered the character of the population but the character of her institutions remains. With the present populational explosion the witness of the free churches in responsible fellowship is essential.



### Dear Church Historian:

A recent letter from the curator of an historical museum in a midwestern state university indicated his pride in being made historian of his local church. Such an office is an honor, whatever one's vocation may be.

A California inquirer asked what provision should be made for the office of historian in a new church constitution. Happily we were able to report that certain leading churches list the historian among other important officers to be elected annually, and also describe the duties. In some cases historians are appointed by the pastor or some responsible board. How were you selected? Were your duties defined? What is your relation to the church clerk? Drop me a line at your convenience and call at our office when you are in Boston. We want to become better acquainted.

Sincerely yours,

VAUGHAN DABNEY, Secretary

### Report from Research Secretary

The accomplishments of the Research Secretary during 1959 were not great but steady progress was made. Only part time is given to the Historical Society, the balance being spent in the library cataloging and filing church histories and in reference and research work in answering the many requests received from ministers and historians throughout the country. There were approximately 100 church histories added during the year in addition to many that came from New York. Fifty or more requests were received for sample programs and church histories. All such requests and accessions were acknowledged by letter. Seventy-six new historians, some of these replacements, were added and each received a personal letter. Letters were also sent to 202 churches who will celebrate significant anniversaries in 1960. The card files were brought up to date and rearranged according to cities and towns. None of these accomplishments could have been realized had it not been for the patience, co-operation and help given me by Dr. Dabney, Mr. Harrer and the other members of the library staff.

CARRIE E. POWELL

### The Covenant in the Wilderness

Copies of this brief absorbing story of New Haven, Conn., by Prof. Roland H. Bainton, Yale Divinity School, were distributed among the delegates to the General Council held in New Haven in 1954, by the New Haven Association. Interested church historians may secure a copy by writing the office of the Society. The supply is limited.

### Old Midway Church in Georgia

A pictorial supplement of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* for Sunday, Nov. 29, 1959, describes the dedication of the Dorchester Midway Colonial Museum, under the auspices of the State Historical Commission, an event which recalls interesting episodes in the history of an old New England church.

The Dorchester Adventure was sponsored by merchants of Dorchester, England, who wanted a mainland base for their fishing fleets. At the instance of Rev. John White, Dorchester rector, provision was made for the religious instruction of the fishermen. "So a little religion, the hope of gain and the allure of a new world led the Dorchester merchants to contribute needed capital for the new world settlement." Eventually a church was established in Dorchester, England, and the members sailed on the ship "Mary and John" under the spiritual guidance of their two pastors, the Rev. John Warham and the Rev. John Maverick, arriving in 1630. They called their new settlement Dorchester, now a part of Boston.

In 1695, descendants of the Dorchester church established Dorchester county, South Carolina, near Charleston, and the New England group, in response to a call, sent down a newly ordained Harvard graduate, Rev. Joseph Lord, to lead the newly organized flock.

When the colony of Georgia was opened for slavery the South Carolina group moved down near Savannah, received a grant of 30,000 acres of good rice lands, built a log church and later erected a lovely white Meeting House at Midway in Liberty County, which still stands near the old burial ground, the final resting place of patriotic and religious leaders. At the close of the War between the States, the church ceased to exist.

During its fruitful life it provided two signers of the Declaration of Independence, distinguished statesmen and educators, and ninety-four ministers and missionaries. One of its ministers, Rev. Abiel Holmes, was the father of Oliver Wendell Holmes; another minister, Rev. Jedidiah Morse, was the father of Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph. Another son of the Midway church was Joseph Le Conte, noted geologist, whose name is associated with the development of the University of California, where he became professor of geology and natural history. Ancestors of Theodore Roosevelt and Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt were from the Midway parish.

At present there is a Midway Congregational church (1879) in McIntosh, Georgia, Rev. V. W. Douglas, minister, affiliated with the Convention of the South, organized in 1950; also a Dorchester Community Center. Verily, "a little religion" goes a long way!



## The Congregational and Christian Conference of Illinois

Following the War of 1812, Illinois began to grow with incredible rapidity. In 1825 the population reached 72,817. To meet such a challenge missionaries from the Missionary Society of Connecticut were sent as itinerant preachers. All of these were content to establish "Plan of Union" Presbyterian Churches. The American Home Missionary Society steadily accelerated its work increasing its missionary force from two men in 1826 to 24 in 1833.

On February 21, 1829, seven Yale Divinity School students signed a compact to promote Christian education in Illinois, later known as the Illinois Band. This Illinois Association was expanded over the succeeding four years by seven additional seminary men. Thus Congregationalism took a strong hold in the state.

In 1830 a seminary of learning soon to become Illinois College was organized. Established at Jacksonville, Illinois, it is the oldest of our colleges West of the Western Reserve. Its first president, Dr. Edward Beecher, of the famous family, came from Park Street Church in Boston.

The first Congregational Church established in Illinois was the result of migration. In 1831 an ecclesiastical council held at Northampton, Massachusetts, recognized 18 people as charter members of a church. These folks in the next few months migrated by Erie Canal, Lake Erie, the St. Jo River, the Kankakee and the Illinois Rivers to the little settlement which is today Princeton, Illinois. The church still bears the name Hampshire Colony Congregational Church. However, the first church established from within the state was at Mendon in 1833. Others were founded with almost frenzied speed and with a passion for Christianizing the West.

Between 1833 and 1844, 85 new Congregational churches were organized, bringing the total to over 110. Formed into three associations they felt a deep need for more unity and expression of common purpose. At Farmington, in 1844 the associations were joined together as the General Congregational Association of Illinois.

The Congregational Conference was established in 1910 with Dr. Wm. E. Barton its first chairman, and Dr. George T. McCollum, of the Illinois Home Missionary Society, as the first conference Superintendent, elected in 1911.

The Illinois Christian Conference was united with the Congregational Conference at LaGrange, Illinois, on May 4, 1931.

Today with 314 churches and almost 100,000 members we look forward to our 50th Anniversary which will be observed at the State Confer-

## Annual Meeting at Hartford

The Annual Luncheon and Business Meeting of the Society will be held Friday, April 29, 1960, in Mackenzie Hall, Hartford Seminary Foundation. The guest of honor and chief speaker will be Dr. Fred Field Goodsell, whose recent book *You Shall Be My Witnesses*, interprets the history of the American Board. The subject of the address will be: **CRISES IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION — PAST AND PRESENT.**

Kindly send luncheon reservations (\$1.50) to Rev. James F. English, D.D., Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, 125 Sherman Street, Hartford 5, Connecticut.

ARTHUR H. BRADFORD, President  
VAUGHAN DABNEY, Secretary

ence to be held May 3, 4, 5, 1960, at the historic Second Congregational Church of Rockford, Illinois.

C. F. McCALL, JR.  
Illinois Conference  
Acting Superintendent

## Wanted: News Letters

Two copies each: Fall 1955; Summer 1957; Summer 1958. Kindly send to Secretary's office.

## Book Review

*Religious Affections* by Jonathan Edwards. Edited by John E. Smith, Yale University Press. 1959. \$7.50. What capacities does an individual possess which enable him to receive the will of God? Jonathan Edwards describes a new spiritual sense. This is not a sixth sense added to the five a person already possesses. It is a supernatural, "new creation." The whole self has become the new spiritual sense which then responds as it could not formerly do. The new man is now able to apprehend the beauty and moral excellence of divine things. This, moreover, is an aesthetic experience, not to be likened to elation at seeing a sunset or hearing a symphony which are mundane. It is of God and expresses the true value of the Biblical phrase "the beauty of holiness." Twelve distinguishing signs are tests to prove the validity of a Christian life. If some points are described in a subtle manner others are plainly put. The introduction is excellent, a book in itself. The editor clearly demonstrates the worth of Edwards' thought for today. Perry Miller describes Jonathan Edwards as "the greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American scene."

JOHN A. HARRER

## PILGRIM PRESS TO PUBLISH "*Creeds and Platforms*"

The Pilgrim Press announces that arrangements have been made for a new printing of Williston Walker's *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. This notable book, originally published by Charles Scribner's Sons, has been out of print for many years and a new printing under the Pilgrim Press imprint will be a welcome addition to our Congregational literature. The publication date and price of the new printing will be announced shortly.

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY CONGREGATIONAL CLUB

This central Massachusetts club in a recent meeting at Agawam featured significant historical exhibits from thirteen churches which included communion silver, ancient records, silhouettes and a conch once used to call people to church. Several churches date from the seventeenth century, First Church, Springfield (1637) being the oldest. Our national Historical Society was represented on the program by John Harrer, Librarian, and Vaughan Dabney, Secretary. It was an inspiring evening of fellowship and remembrance under the leadership of Rev. Oliver K. Black, president, assisted by Mrs. Wilson Dougherty, club secretary, Rev. E. T. Chapman, host pastor, and the participating church historians, who described their respective exhibits.

## INVOCATION FOR LENT

Almighty God, whose Son did steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem and was there delivered up as thy Suffering Servant: send thy renewing spirit upon us as we follow in memory our Lord's journey; that we may steadfastly set our hearts to follow him with true penitence and quickened faith, and may thereby emerge more than conqueror out of the tribulations of our time; through the same Christ our Lord, Amen.

ARTHUR PRESTON COLBOURN

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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